

## Educational Methodologies

### Youth At-Risk: Preventing Student Dropouts and Facilitating Reintegration

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The Aharon Ofri International Training Center  
Ramat Rachel, Jerusalem

Within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, the goal addressing education is particularly ambitious, in stating that:

"...by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling".

This goal presents a great challenge which must be met with creativity, resourcefulness, and hard work.

One of the targeted populations within the stated goal is **youth at-risk**. This label- given by various authorities (psychologists, educators, and sociologists) - refers to vulnerable adolescents from all socio-economic backgrounds for whom normal family life has been disrupted, and lack sufficient parental or adult interaction.

For these young people, the educational system takes on a special significance. Therefore, it is especially crucial to create educational opportunities to widen access towards education. These children must integrate into schools and training programs as quickly and as fully as possible, so they could have multiple opportunities for meaningful learning experiences.

However, "access" is complex and multifaceted. The professional educators who constantly mediate between students and the world around them must be even more supportive and caring when working with this special-needs group. Educators must create opportunities and impart skills, competencies and attitudes that will enable these adolescents to be productive and resourceful members of society.



Every nation today is involved in the challenging process of providing a quality education to meet the new demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Educational systems have to develop innovative outreach programs for these school dropouts, focusing all efforts on creating positive conditions and individual skills that will foster resiliency and offset risk factors.

Given Israel's many national responsibilities – including the absorption of massive numbers of immigrants from various countries and cultures, while simultaneously dealing with emergency situations – its instructional and educational personnel have an important and highly complex role.

Israel has achieved considerable progress in increasing the number of students between the ages 12-18 who attend high school. However, despite Israel's Ministry of Education's policy for the prevention of student dropout and the development of special and varied curricula, some of these young people have not been successfully integrated into the existing system. In order to deal with this challenge and its ramifications, the Ministry has made strides in the field of youth advancement, via the development of the *Youth and Society Administration*. This section in the Ministry works toward developing and advancing the educational-remedial services for those students that have dropped out of formal educational frameworks.

In cooperation with Israel's Ministry of Education, the A. Ofri International Training Center initiated capacity development programs dealing with **youth at-risk**, including a program on “**Educational Methodologies – Youth At-Risk: Preventing Student Dropout and Facilitating Reintegration**”.

This program is conducted under the sponsorship of Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV), a department in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### Aims of the Program:

To train participants to successfully:

- Create a relationship of mutual trust with youth in order to enable their reintegration into the educational system.



- Help individual youths develop and realize their potential so that they may help themselves and their society.
- Reduce alienation from the community and society.
- Plan educational services and interventions for youths ages 12-18 considered at-risk according to the following characteristics:
  - Detached youths who do not study or work in a formal or informal educational framework
  - Working youth who do not have a supportive educational framework
  - Youth at-risk who commit open or clandestine crimes
  - High-risk youth needing individual and ongoing support in areas including completing their education, job placement, and personal and social skills
- Raise multicultural awareness in those working toward the advancement of disadvantaged youth
- Provide tools and guidelines for curricular development
- Advance teaching methods for specific subject matter (such as science and language), as well as interdisciplinary subject areas
- Train and advance educational staff and support them in sustaining their duties and promoting their programs
- Enable participants to choose the methods and tools suitable to the particular needs of their environment
- Provide a basis for future training activities according to the needs of the different countries and institutions

### Program Content:

- Latest concepts, methods, and tools for educational staff training
- Model of the Pluralistic Identity
- Models of Multicultural Education
- Programs designed to implement the compulsory education law for detached youth who are not integrated into formal educational frameworks, including special programs for youth in protective institutions and prisons
- Humanistic Mathematics as a Tool of Educational Insertion
- Science and Technology Projects as a Tool for Educational Insertion



- Education towards completion of certificates on various high school grade levels, within the framework of compensatory centers operated in cooperation with local authorities
- The development of social skills, practical skills and leadership
- Special seminars on civic education
- The training of special educational personnel to work with youth at-risk
- Computerized information centers to provide services for youth, locally and nationally
- Complementary education for school-excluded youth: An Evaluation Study – "From Exclusion to Inclusion"
- Improving awareness in teachers of disadvantaged students
- Ways and means designed to assist latent school dropouts
- Correlation between cultural gaps and learning perseverance level
- The influence of achievement, motivation and aspiration on learning processes
- Prevention of violent behavior among school students through the advancement of youth programs
- Education to prevent use of drugs and alcohol
- Sexual education

### **Methodology:**

- Lectures and discussions led by experts
- Workshops
- Analysis of educational planning through written material and professional visits
- Meetings with institutional administrators
- Exposure to projects at the national and regional level
- Simulations, panel discussions, and group work
- Preparation of final projects by individuals or groups, based on the professional interests of participants
- Study tours: Schools, educational centers (including science and art centers), universities, teacher training institutions, and pedagogical resource centers



### **Social Activities and Tours:**

Organized tours of the holy sites and locations of general and historical interest will be conducted. Social and cultural activities will be arranged.

### **Program Requirements:**

High-level educational staff, at the regional or national level, dealing with the target population

School principals, counselors, supervisors

Lecturers at teacher training institutions

Researchers in relevant fields

**Application forms should be send to the relevant Israeli Mission and to the Ofri Center by or before 10.1.2012**

Application forms at The Israeli Diplomatic and/or Consular Representatives serving at the applicant's country.

### **Certificate of Studies:**

A Certificate of Studies will be awarded to participants who have attended classes regularly and fulfilled all requirements.

**Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV) will assume costs relating to:**

- a) Registration and tuition fees
- b) Accommodations (Room and Board)



- c) Health insurance and basic medical care (This does not include dental care, glasses and chronic illnesses)

### **Accommodations:**

Participants will reside at Ramat Rachel Hotel on the outskirts of Jerusalem

2 people per room.

### **A Window to Innovations in Education**

#### *There is no Developing Without Education and Education Depends on Developing*

#### MASHAV - Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation

Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, known as MASHAV, was founded in 1958 as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is responsible for initiating and implementing Israel's development cooperation program worldwide. MASHAV aims at transferring the expertise and technologies which have assisted Israel on its own path to development to other countries.

Today, Israel cooperates with over 140 countries, providing training in Israel and abroad, operating on-site demonstration projects and building medical infrastructure in partner countries.

The World Conference on Education held in Thailand in 1990, marked the emergence of an international consensus that education is the single most vital element in the fight against poverty.

**The Ofri International Training Center** was established in 1989 as a core extension of MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The Center's area of expertise is the transmission of knowledge about education, which is essential for the development of civil society. It concerns itself with learning at all levels, from elementary and secondary school through adult education, and provides knowledge and training for basic skills development, civic awareness, community education, education for special populations, treatment for youth (including those at risk), youth integration, youth leadership, education for health and the prevention of drugs abuse.



In adopting the UN's Millennium Development Goals, the Ofri Center contributes to the sustainable development of human resources internationally, based on knowledge and experience accumulated in Israel.

Since its inception, the Ofri Center has trained thousands of professionals from countries throughout the world. The Center cooperates with senior staff in the Israeli Ministry of Education, academic experts, government organizations and non-governmental organizations. In addition, it communicates and cooperates with key international organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, USAID, UNOCD, IOM and the World Bank.

*"Education leads to empowerment – the surest guarantee of sustainable grow"*